



Preparing Workers for Life

February 22, 2013

To whom it may concern:

On behalf of Career Resources, Inc., I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Appropriations Subcommittee for their hard work and for allowing me the opportunity to voice my opinion on such a critical budgetary decision that will affect our communities and thousands of non-custodial parents in the State of Connecticut. As a representative of my agency, I am imploring the Appropriations Subcommittee to fund the highly successful *Fathers for Life* program under the Fatherhood Initiative in the State of Connecticut.

As I ponder the issue of budgetary cuts, the expression "between a rock and a hard place", a dilemma and situation that offers two possibilities, neither of which is acceptable, comes to mind. This dilemma offers little, if any viable options for our non-custodial parents; however, the *Fathers for Life* program, and other programs like it, serves as the alternate route between those two possibilities. Through our skill-based solutions and strengths-based approach, we provide access to the valued programs, services, and resources needed by our fathers and mothers. We are the difference between continued involvement with the criminal justice system and reintegration into the community, becoming a visible and real part of their children's lives.

The return on the investment for Connecticut Tax Payers is high because these solutions produce real outcomes. Mindsets about accountability and responsible parenting are changed, financial independence is realized due to improved economic status, torn relationships between the non-custodial and biological parents are repaired, belief and values systems are restored, individuals become empowered, and our communities grow and prosper. Most importantly, the children, who represent our future, have a chance to enjoy a fruitful and healthy childhood under the care of loving parents.

Since 2000, *Fathers for Life* has partnered with a wide range of community and faith-based organizations, providers and volunteers to serve hundreds of non-custodial parents by helping them to establish paternity, address child support arrearage and become court compliant, access education and training opportunities, and ultimately, obtain suitable employment. We are just one of many programs that are working towards these same objectives, and there is still much work to be done to bridge the gap "between a rock and the hard place."

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Eliminating the Fatherhood Initiative from the State's budget would be devastating, and would prove detrimental, not only to our non-custodial parents and their families, but to program and service providers, cities and towns, communities at large, and the State of Connecticut. The long-term benefit of the successful outcomes of the *Fathers for Life* program and Fatherhood Initiative, far outweigh the cost associated with operating these programs. The issue is not whether or not you can afford to fund these programs; the issue is whether or not you can afford **not** to fund these programs.

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Therefore, I strongly encourage you to fight to keep the Fatherhood Initiative in the budget and help us to close that gap "between a rock and a hard place." Thank you for your time and consideration. Please contact me at the information below with any questions or concerns you might have.

Sincerely,

Barbara "BJ" Thomas

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